

# critical digest



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## This Week In NYC

The 5% NYC theatre admission tax was slated for repeal by the NY City Council after favorable hearings before the Finance Committee. Ticket prices will remain the same, with the estimated \$2 million yearly being used by the producers to pay actors and craft union pension payments. Robert Whitehead, League of NY Theatres president, told an open hearing that the action would increase the volume of productions, aid in keeping marginal shows alive, help various sections of the city's economy which depends on theatre patrons, and bolster the drive to end the 10% federal tax.

## Plays

Rhinoceros closed limited two week revisit prior to tour opening Oct 2 in San Francisco... LOOK! We've Come Through is new spelling of title of Hugh Wheeler's play due Oct 25 Hudson... We Take the Town musical adaptation of "Viva Villa" film starring Robert Preston on "Panchito Villa" to be presented Mar 15... No Strings musical by Richard Rodgers-Samuel Taylor to be directed by Joe Layton, 30 year old dance director, and will co-star Eileen Herlie, Richard Kiley, Diahann Carroll.

## Players

Donald Scott, London under study, to replace Theodore Bikel, The Sound of Music, Oct 7... Diana van der Vlis to be featured in A Shot in the Dark... Myrna Loy to star in There Must Be A Pony adaptation by Jim Kirkwood, Jr of his own novel, to be presented by Alan Pakula after a long pre-Broadway tour... Frank Fay, 64, died in Santa Monica, Calif.

## Playhouse

Hudson Playhouse prospective buyer revealed as Samuel Lehrer, parking garage owner, by Zolotow, Times. Handshake agreement with NBC for \$1.1 million reported. He would not deny that if he does purchase theatre he would demolish it and build a parking garage.

## NYC Calendar

The Sap of Life-One Sheridan Sq 10/2. Quartet Productions presents a new musical comedy with book and lyrics by Richard Malthby, Jr, music by David Shire, directed by William Francisco with Jack Bitner, Dina Paisner.

Sail Away-Broadhurst 10/3. Bonard Productions present new musical with book, score, lyrics and direction by Noel Coward, dances by Joe Layton with Elaine Stritch, James Hurst.

The Caretaker-Lyceum 10/4 Roger Stevens-Fred Brisson present British drama by Harold Pinter, directed by Donald McWhinnie with Donald Pleasence, Alan Bates, Robert Shaw.

Blood Sweat and Stanley Poole-Morosco 10/5. Roger Stevens-Fields Productions present new army comedy by James & William Goldman, directed by Joseph Chodorov with Darren McGavin, Peter Fonda.

## Broadway Business

Variety reports drop at most shows with poor attendance at mid-week matinee due to threat of Hurricane Esther. Carnival sole sellout.

## Special Events

Phoenix Theatre to present three one hour programs at 200 elementary and high schools in the NYC area this season, all directed by Alvin Epstein. First will consist of scenes from Caesar and Cleopatra, Chekhov's The Brute. Second "Sound and Sense" bill is designed to arouse students interest in verse. Final "Phoenix Americana" program will be a cavalcade of famous American dramas. Each has cast of four.

## Theatre Film Notes

My Fair Lady to be sold to Warner Bros. for record bid of \$5.5 million cash, plus 47 % of gross over \$20 million.

## Off Broadway

Clandestine on the Morning Line by Josh Greenfield to be presented with all Negro cast Oct 24 at Actors Playhouse by John Weems -Robert Buccolo featuring James Earl Jones, directed by Allen Davis, Ford Foundation project play debuted at Arena Theatre, Washington, D.C... O Marry Me musical adaptation of "She Stoops to Conquer" postponed Gate opening from Oct 20 to Oct 27... Go Show Me A Dragon play by Gene Feldman also scheduled for Oct 27 at Midway featuring Guy Sothorn... David Atkinson left Three Penny Opera for starring role in All in Love musical version of "The Rivals" Oct 30 at 41st St.

## Theatre TV Notes

Come Blow Your Horn gave five closed circuit TV performances shown at Golden Theatre-on 15x 22 screen for Dynamic Films, Inc test. Concern plans to telecast a still to be picked current Broadway production in Jan to be shown in a theatre in a city 200-500 miles from NYC at 1/2 Broadway ticket prices.

"Accent on Broadway" ABC-TV Nov 30 to present scenes from past musical hits with original casts, Yves Montand host... BBC-TV production of Antigone to be presented this season on WNEW-TV(NYC) and WTTG-TV(Wash.)

## Theatre Book Notes

Curtmantle by Christopher Fry to be published in Oct by Oxford Univ. Press

## Legal Dept

Bob Fosse awarded 6c damages in American Arbitration Assn hearings against Robert Whitehead. The Conquering Hero choreographer claimed produced had no right to use his two ballet numbers after he was fired as director of last season's musical flop.

# DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

From the Second City- Royale 9/26. 3 pro- Times, Herald Tribune, World Telegram & Sun- and 4 con- News, Mirror, Post, Journal American- filed on new revue with and by Howard Alk, Alan Arkin, Severn Darden, Andrew Duncan, Barbara Harris, Mina Kolb, Paul Sand, and Eugene Troanick, directed by Paul Sils, presented by Max Leibman, Bernard Sahlins, Alk & Sils. All praised talents of young author-performers from Chicago cabaret theatre "The Second City", difference of opinion was on the contents of revue. While all eight received praise, most of the salutes as the most talented went to Barbara Harris. Affirmative side headed by mild okay from Taubman, Times, plus rave notices from Kerr, Herald Tribune, and Nadel, World Telegram & Sun. Times aisle-sitter thought at its best it was wonderfully fresh, pointed and witty, but when ills crop out it struggles and pants and produces little fevered gasps. Herald Tribune man raved for the eight brand new, bright, bubbling model entertainers, original, eye-opening and recommended. WTS reviewer cheered the first rate entertainment, polished, seasoned and nearly flawless, secure and scintillating. Negative voter Chapman, News, was a little less enthusiastic than the rest of the con side, he marked it bright, eager, clean, but semi-pro. Coleman, Mirror, approved of clever spoofers, but not of their dubious material, much of which he could not agree with. Watts, Post, agreed with several others who felt show was more suited for coffee house than playhouse. Post critic also found so much that is good that he wished it seemed more stalwart. McClain, Journal American, labeled it a spotty, near miss with occasional moments of hilarity, though often more forced than funny.

Choephori and Eumendies - City Center- 9/26-10/1. 4 pro- Times, Herald Tribune, World Telegram & Sun, Journal American- and 1 con- News- filed on second program of Greek Tragedy Theatre, Aeschylus' final two sections of his Orestes legend directed by Dimitri Rondiris, presented in modern Greek with transistor translation by James Dimitri and Helen Conn. The reviewers all praised inspiring chorus though they differed on individual portrayals, several noting that Orestes' portrayed by D. Veakis seemed miscast. Est-erow, Times, applauded rewarding night of theatre by the gifted company. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, listed chorus as star with the two leads lacking in variety. O'Connor, Journal American, raved over spell cast by entire company that verged on fascination. Alpert, WTS, found little communication of emotion, but agreed the debates are timeless and the company's movement onstage was quite beautiful. Sole dissenter, Watt, News, was unable to summon up much enthusiasm for Veakis acting or that of most of the others.

## NYC FUTURE CALENDAR

Milk & Honey- Beck 10/10...Everybody Loves Opal- Longacre 10/11...Let It Ride- O'Neill- 10/12...How to Succeed- 46th St 10/14...Do You Know the Milky Way- Rose - 10/16...Another Evening with Harry Stoones- Gram Arts- 10/16...Diff'rent- Mermaid- 10/17...A Shot in the Dark - Booth 10/18...A Cook for Mr General- Playhouse 10/19...Anthony on Overtime- Blackfrairs- 10/20...Kwamina-54th- 10/23...Clandestine on Morning Line- Actors Play 10/24...Yves Montand- Golden 10/24...LOOK! We've Come Thru- Hudson 10/25 Write Me A Murder- Belasco 10/26...O Marry Me- Gate- 10/27...Go Show Me A Dragon-Midway 10/27...The Buskers- Cricket 10/28...Go Fight City Hall- Mayfair 10/30...All in Love- 41st St 10/30... Garden of Sweets- ANTA 10/31

The Thracian Horses-Orpheum (126-2nd Av) 9/27 3 pro- Mirror, Post, Journal American- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, News, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new comedy based on Alcestis legend by Maurice Valency, presented by Chandler Warren-William Boal, staged by Malcolm Black with Nancy Wickwire, Nicolas Coster, Louis Zorich, Thomas Barbour. Pro voters enjoyed play and players, while con voters thought it contained a promising idea not fully exploited, while two panned players as well. Affirmative aisle-sitter Coleman, Mirror, approved of capable and sometimes rousing performance, stunning performance by Wickwire and outstanding sets by Peter Harvey and costumes by Roy Diffen. O'Connor, Journal American, praised everything except final scene, which he termed ridiculous. Watts, Post, enjoyed pleasant and intelligent comedy, even though it is sometimes less brilliant at times than it promises to be. Negative reviewer Taubman, Times, vetoed it because the potentially amusing idea needed the touch of Shaw or Giraudoux instead of gentle irony of a scholar. Kerr, Herald Tribune, panned script as unfinished and acting as bad, with sole exception of Wickwire. Davis, tabbed it spotty fun. Nadel, WTS, also found fault with acting, direction and writing. Script had been optioned 18 times in past 20 years for Broadway.

Misalliance-Sheridan Sq ( 99-7th Av S) 9/25. 6 pro- and 1 con- Journal American- filed on revival of 1910 Shaw comedy by Stuart Duncan-Philip Minor, staged by Minor with Donald Moffat, Frances Sternhagen, Frances Ingalls. Majority was unanimous in praise for entire cast and direction. Single dissenter found it too talky, the theatre itself too hot.

Ghosts- 4th St ( 83 E 4) 9/21. 5 pro- and 2 con- News, World Telegram & Sun- filed on David Ross' revival of the early Ibsen drama, adapted by Carmel Ross from R. Farquarson Sharp's translation with Leueen McGrath, Carrie Nye, Staats Cotsworth, John McQuade, Joseph Marino. Pro side found it still interesting in spite of its age, and well presented though critics differed on talents of cast. Con voters, Davis, News, and Nadel, WTS, thought play too dated to retain much interest. Latter suggested a reading at home was just as sufficient as attendance at theatre.

The Opening of a Window-Theatre Marquee ( 110 E 59) 9/25. 3 pro- News, Mirror, Journal American- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Post, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new play by Gene Radano, a NYC patrolman, presented by Bram Appel- Jerome Guardino, directed by Fran Malis with Olympia Dukakis, Philip Sterling, Guardino. All were mild on author, many suggesting he was writer of promise, and most approved of cast. Mild pros for script admitted author had much to learn, but expressed view that his slice of NY Italian life was moving and interesting. Cons felt script lacked form and tension, while Crist, Herald Tribune panned it as "I Remember Mama Mia" done in stultifying sincerity.

Fourth Avenue North- Madison (30th & Madison) 9/27. 7 con- unanimous- filed on new revue presented by Shippen Gear-Michael Battersberry, staged by Battersberry with Clint Anderson, Alice Nunn, Eugenia Hunt, Gerrienne Raphael, Sylvia Shay, Rory Harrity. Material, not cast, was to blame, all agreed. Inept, unfortunate material, summed Calta, Times, Conventional and uninspired, added Crist, Herald Tribune, No such street and let's try to forget there is such a revue, urged Watt, News. Alice Nunn did best for comedy, but not an outstanding voice in the lot, sighed Herridge, Post. What can you say after you say you are sorry, sings Alpert, WTS. An earnest cast failed to avert a disaster, concludes McClain, Journal American



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

**THEATRE TAX CUT...**Diverse editorial views were expressed by three NYC daily papers on repeal of the 5% NYC admission tax. Times is not persuaded that it is a necessary contribution to the theatre's survival, much less to NY's budgetary well-being. Problems that have caused so much anxiety about the theatre's future seem much too complex to be solved on any such facile basis; a good play can still make a handsome return for its investors; no succor from City Hall will help a poor one... Post editorial sees \$2 million rebate as a hand-out to producers, a short range gimmick that leaves the larger problems such as union featherbedding essentially untouched. Afternoon daily urged time for more public discussion and exploration... News mildly supported the cut, but suggested to make it more palatable to the millions who never go to the legit theatre a cut-back in the 5% restaurant check tax to 3%... Davis, News, believes that in effect the taxpayer who attends the theatre will be paying more than ever before. With no cut in ticket prices and with the \$2 million still needed, other taxes will have to be made.

**SUBSIDY & OFF BWAY...**Playwrights looking to either Off Broadway and/or subsidized theatre as a solution to their problems were warned of the pressures of packaging their plays so they could be produced in these special situations by Kerr, Herald Tribune. It is not the playwright's task to satisfy a single audience that constitutes no more than a segment of the body social. His true, ultimate task is to touch a rainbow of segments, a motley assembly of disparate minds in such a way to polarize them, fuse them, make them one in the excitement of many. This, explains Kerr, is the theatre's most peculiar gift, the gift that detaches it from a dozen other art forms and helps define it.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...**Six months is all that Davis, News gives the theatre if all playwrights were Becketts, Genets, Albees, Brechts... Happy Daze might have been a good name for Beckett's new play, notes McClain, Journal American... Sean O'Casey sees Red too often for Coleman, Mirror, to worry that he has refused permission for his plays to be presented at Dublin Festival... It isn't of the utmost importance to a biographical drama that its hero be a household word to its audience, points out Watts, Post, The play must stand or fall on its theatrical effectiveness.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...**Central box-office selling tickets at regular box-office prices backed by Times reader... Herald Tribune reader hopes that the critics so impressed by Joe Papp's NY Shakespeare Festival productions won't hesitate to call him down when he falters.

**HITS REVISITED...**Camelot with William Squire replacing Richard Burton and John Cullum replacing Roddy McDowall is still one of the transcendent musical theatre experiences for Nadel, World Telegram & Sun. He first saw Lerner & Loewe show in Toronto. Entire company continues to play it like opening night, and the orchestra is splendid.

Misalliance is a delicious slice of Shaw at his wittiest, launching verbal attacks at dozens upon dozens of subjects, most very timely, through a perfectly delightful set of slightly insane, but nice, characters. Inspired direction aided by a handsome in-the-round set put the audience right in the living room with as charming a group of talented actors seen On or Off Broadway in a long, long time. Basically plotless and action-less, the perfect portrayals by the entire company make the three hour production seem much too short.

Ghosts is an interesting presentation of the modern classic, a notable addition to David Ross' one man downtown drama education. The two female performers Leueen MacGrath and Carrie Nye, plus John McQuade in a smaller role, present brilliant characterizations and do much to make the early Ibsen play exciting. But the two major male players are woefully weak, one overacting and fluffing the other under-acting.

One Way Pendulum is a British avant-garde comedy whose main redeemable feature is an ingenious "break-away" set by Peter Harvey. A bold imitation of You Can't Take It With You and half a dozen other comedies the result is an unfunny, pretentious evening. While most of the players were thoroughly intimidated by the no-sense script, Carey Nairns as a wild and wacky judge was forceful and effective.

Choepori and Eumenides presentation of Aeschylus' Orestes legend by Greek Tragedy Theatre at City Center was fascinating from the historical and spectacle viewpoints. The brilliant churning and weaving of the 14 chorus members built up an excitement and tension that passed the language barrier with ease. The majestic set seemed to move and expand with their movements. But the lead players in both portions were not equal in style and technique to the highly trained chorus. The translation for the twin-bill was more effective than that for "Electra," but the recorded background music seemed out of place and meaningless. Nevertheless NY theatre fans must once again be thankful for the opportunity to see world theatre on W 55th St. at reasonable prices.

The White House entertainment by Stratford, Conn, players of scenes from Shakespeare this week is the highest tribute yet paid the theatre by a president. While Congress turned down his bid for an Arts Council, Mr. Kennedy in his own way is showing that theatre is an important American creative art. If it is good enough for Presidents and Kings, it might some day be good enough for Congress... Congress also has a responsibility when the time comes to insure that any repeal of the 10% Federal admission tax goes someplace else besides the producers bank accounts. A firm rider to a bill requiring either a 10% reduction in ticket prices or a 10% donation to the nearest non-profit repertory theatre would win congressmen thanks, if not votes.





OUTER  
BROADWAY  
THEATRE  
LETTER

College Theatre

The Last Days of Lincoln by Mark Van Doren will be presented Oct 18-24 at Florida State Univ, Tallahassee, sponsored by Eddie Dowling Foundation. A Trumpet Calling, a musical by Abel Plenn and Skitch Henderson will be presented early this season at Univ of South Florida, starring Elsa Lancaster, and Never Wave at a Moosea comedy by Norwood Chamberlain will be presented at Jacksonville, Fla. Univ, starring Charles Ruggles. Foundation presents new plays with combined professional and student casts at university playhouses at low cost. A percentage of future professional royalties goes to foundation if plays are presented on Broadway or elsewhere.

Catawba College, Salisbury, N.C. seeking scripts for "New American Playwrights" project. One to be presented Mar 14 with author-in-residence... Max Gordon lectures Oct 12 at Marshall College, Huntington, West Va... J.B. opens season at Univ of Redlands, Calif. Greek Tragedy Theatre opened tour there.

Arts Centers

House of Representatives defeated by close 173 to 166 vote a bill to set up 21 member commission to advise Federal government on arts. Opposition claimed needed money must go for defense spending... K. LeMoyné Billings, Lennen & Newell advertising executive, appointed to Board of Trustees, National Cultural Center, Washington, D.C.

New Playhouses

Fisher Theatre, Detroit, debuted with The Gay Life tryout Sept 30. New \$3.5 million playhouse is on ground floor or Fisher Bldg skyscraper, it seats 1606 for dramas and 2081 for musicals.

Community Theatres

Hollow Trumpet a new play by Richard Malloy presented by Plays and Players, Philadelphia, directed by author with Carmen Mathews as guest star... Boston Little Theatre opened second season Sept 28 with The House of Bernarda Alba at Nova Gallery, 27 Stanhope St.

Winter Repertory

Alan Fletcher and William Ball signed as guest directors of repertory company at Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, following conclusion of Assn. of Producing Artists 10 week series Oct 17-Dec 23.

Image Theatre, Boston, will open season of one-act plays presented by repertory company Oct 12-14 with Genet's Deathwatch... Originals Only & Mary-Lind Foundation first showcase at Gold Room, Los Angeles is The Virgin King by Elizabeth Kaeburn... Born Yesterday with Vivian Blaine, currently at Playhouse on the Mall, Paramus, NJ

Shakespeare

Joseph Verner Reed named producer of American Shakespeare Festival, Stratford, Conn, replacing Jack Landau as artistic director. Future productions will stick to "traditional" Shakespeare with few shifts of period; each production to have a different director.

Oct 4 White House, Washington, D.C. entertainment following state dinner in honor of President of Sudan to feature Stratford, Conn. players Hiram Sherman, Donald Davis, Carrie Nye, Julian Miller, Ted van Griethuysen in scenes from As You Like It, Henry V, and Troilus and Cressida.

Summer Playhouses

John Kelly Playhouse, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, considering construction of cultural center to include a children's theatre, actors residence and enlargement and air-conditioning of theatre itself... Eddie Albert to establish musical theatre tents next summer in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu in association with Ben Segal and Bob Hall.

Seattle Fair

Seattle World's Fair opening Apr 21, 1962 theatre features include-- Old Vic Company with Saint Joan, Romeo and Juliet, Merchant of Venice May 21-27... Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden in Miss Julie and Long Day's Journey into Night (in Swedish) May 27- Jun 3... Greek National Theatre Sept 5-10.

Road Shows

A Short Happy Life cut short San Francisco tryout run, but plans to open on schedule Oct 3 in Los Angeles... Three Penny Opera with Gypsy Rose Lee to fold after second week of Toronto run, start of planned 30 week tour... Milk and Honey cancelled a Boston matinee due to Hurricane Esther... Flora Elkins replaced Anne Jackson, Rhinoceros... With Love From Genevieve revue with Genevieve to start national tour in Oct, aiming for Broadway in spring, Herb Rogers producer.

London

The Affair adaptation of C P Snow novel opened to rave notices... Royal Court to present Edward Albee twin-bill American Dream and Death of Bessie Smith Oct 23 with author at opening... Androcles and the Lion and The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet to be presented Oct 3 at Mermaid.

Paris

Monsieur Blot new play opening this week at Gramont features 17 actors portraying 144 roles.

Current Road Tours

A Cook for Mr. General - Wilbur, Boston 10/2

Everybody Loves Opal-Fords Baltimore 9/25

Gay Life- Fisher- Detroit 9/30

How to Succeed- Shubert- Philadelphia 9/4

Kean- Shubert- Boston 9/16

Kicks & Co- Aire Crown, Chicago 10/7

Kwamina-Colonial- Boston 9/26

Shot in Dark- Walnut, Philadelphia 10/2

Write Me a Murder- Shubert New Haven 10/4

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



